

MY
MOTHER
AT
SIXTY
SIX



Kamala
Das



ABOUT THE POET

Kamala Das was born on 31 March 1934, known by her pen name Madhavikutty. Kamala Das was born in Punnayurkulam, Thrissur District in Kerala. She was a major Indian English poet and novelist and at the same time a leading Malayalam author from Kerala, India. At the age of 42, she published a daring autobiography, "*My Story*". she embraced Islam in

Kamala Das has received many awards for her literary contribution, including:

- > Nominated and shortlisted for Nobel Prize for Literature in 1984.
- > Kerala Sahitya Academy Award - 1969 (for *Cold*)
- > Sahitya Academy Award - 1985-
- >> Vayalar Award - 2001
- > Ezhuthachan Puraskaram – 2009



MY MOTHER AT SIXTY SIX - (Poem extract)

“Driving from my parent’s home to Cochin last Friday morning, I saw my mother, beside me doze, open mouthed, her face ashen like that of a corpse and realized with pain that she was as old as she looked but soon put

out of their homes, but after the airport’s security check, standing a few yards away, I looked again at her, wan, pale As a late winter’s moon and felt that old familiar ache, my childhood’s fear, but all I said was, see you soon

“Driving from
my parent’s
home
To Cochin last
Friday morning,
I saw my mother
beside me.

doze, open
mouthed, her
face ashen like
that

of a corpse and



Beside:

alongside

Doze: nap

Ashen: pale

Corpse: dead

that she was as old as she looked but soon put that thought away, and looked out at Young Trees sprinting, the merry children spilling



Spilling: let out

Sprinting: Moving fast

but after the
airport's
security check
standing a few
yards
away, I looked
again at her,
wan, pale



Wan: dim, weak

Pale: dull,
colourless

as a late winter's
moon and felt
that old
familiar ache, my
childhood's fear,
but all I said was,
see you soon,
Amma, all I c



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Ache : Pain

was smile and

THEME

The theme of ageing is a natural process and yet the fear of separation from your loved ones is explored to its best in this poem. The poem also talks about the loneliness that aged people experience and the feeling of guilt their children experience for not being able to be with their parents in their old age. It portrays a sensational separation of a mother and a daughter.

LINGUISTIC CONTENT

- ❑ The poem is written in free verse. It has no rhyme scheme.
- ❑ Kamala Das' poetry is most often identified as confessional poetry.
- ❑ The tone of this poem is predominantly pensive and sorrowful.

WHERE WAS THE POET GOING TO AND WITH WHOM ?

The poet was driving from her parent's home to Cochin airport. She was accompanied by her mother who was sixty six



“HER FACE ASHEN LIKE THAT
OF A CORPSE”

She noticed her mother dozing with her mouth wide open. Her face looked pale and cold and as lifeless as a dead body. The mother seemed to have



YOUNG TREES SPRINTING AND MERRY CHILDREN SPILLING”

➤ Young trees seem to be running or sprinting while travelling in a



The merry children who are enthusiastic, vibrant and active are spilling out of their homes. For time being, she could keep away of old age and separation from her



➤ They symbolize the spontaneity of life in contrast to the passive and inactive life of her aged mother.

➤ Her mother is an image of ageing.

“PUT THAT THOUGHT WAY

The poet was disturbed at the thought that with ageing comes death and decay. This turning away doesn't symbolize turning away from her responsibility towards her mother, but only turning away from her own pain-filled emotions.

In order to drive her thought away from pain, the poet looks outside the car..



"WAN PALE AS A LATE WINTER'S MOON"

A second glance at her pale and colourless face reminded her of a pale moon which is misty and



Just like the late winter moon lacks brightness as well as strength, the mother too appears dull, pale and devoid of brightness of youth.

OLD FAMILIAR CHILDHOOD ACHE”

The poet looks intensely at her mother, who was taking a nap and dozing off with her mouth wide open. Her pale face looks as pale as
dy.



pain in the poet's
heart as the childhood
of losing her
parents her. It
was that she found hard
to accept that with ageing,

“SEE YOU SOON AMMA...”

- She bids goodbye to her mother with the parting words, “See you soon Amma”. This was a way of reassuring herself and her mother that they will meet again. The poet’s continuous smiling is an attempt to overcome the ache and fear inside her heart. She suppresses her true feelings to her mother.
- Although she herself is not sure when she will be able to see her mother next time, she puts on a long and sweet



POETIC DEVICE USED (FIGURE OF SPEECH)

- ❖ **Personification:** This device is used to bestow human qualities on something that is not human. In this poem, the poet uses the device of personification with respect to trees. She imagines the trees to be figures that are running alongside her car. “Trees sprinting” signify vigour and freshness. It also refers to the passage of time which is moving fast.
- ❖ **Simile:** “her face ashen like that of a corpse” “wan, pale as a late winter’s moon”
- ❖ **Repetition:** “ all I did was smile and smile and smile....”
- ❖ **Contrasts:** (a) Inside the car, it was dull, gloomy and lifeless. On the contrary, life outside was full of life, freshness and vigour. She notices the trees that her car is going past and they appear to be moving at an equally fast pace by themselves. She also notices children pouring out of their houses excitedly
(b) The poet using a contrast to express herself clearly comes at the very end of the poem. The sorrow in her heart is in contrast with the smile she has bravely put on her face as she says goodbye to her mother.
- ❖ **Imagery:** “Young trees sprinting, merry children spilling” symbolize happiness, strength and vigour. It signifies continuity of life.

MESSAGE

The poem also sends a very strong message to the youth of today,

‘Do not be so selfish in your fulfillment of your wishes that you forget to take care of your parents when they need you the most.





THANK YOU

